

In the Claims

1-11. (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) A method of producing and filling containers, comprising the steps of:

extruding a tube of softened plastic material into an open mold;

closing the tube at a projecting end thereof by closing the mold to form a bottom of a container;

separating the tube above the mold by a separating element to form a filler opening;

moving the mold with the tube having the filler opening in the mold into a filling position;

after the tube is formed into the container by generating a pressure gradient acting on the tube in the mold to expand the tube, filling the container through the filler opening;

sealing the filler opening;

covering the filler opening by a sterile barrier at least from a formation time for the filler opening to filling of the tube; and

conveying at least one sterile medium in a direction of the filler opening from the sterile barrier by a media delivery device.

13. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein the sterile medium is air, inert gas and/or hydrogen peroxide.

14. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein the sterile medium is conveyed at a specified over-pressure in the direction of the filler opening.

15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein non-viable particles are exhausted by a suction device.

16. (previously presented) A method according to claim 15 wherein the suction device is a vacuum device.

17. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein the sterile barrier comprises a plate-shaped cover element that covers the filler opening after separation of the tube, and provides the filler opening with the sterile media until the container is filled below a sterile filling space.

18. (previously presented) A method according to claim 17 wherein the cover element moves together with the separating element during separation of the tube, and does not clear the filler opening until filling of the container.

19. (previously presented) A method according to claim 17 wherein the cover element moves synchronously with parts of the mold, and does not clear the filler opening until filling of the container.

20. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein
the container is flushed across the filler opening by the sterile medium by the media
delivery device.
- 21 (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein
the container is partially filled with the sterile medium by the media delivery device.
22. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein
the sterile barrier and the sterile medium are heated to a temperature higher than 120° C.
23. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein
the sterile barrier and the sterile medium are heated to a temperature in a range of 150° C
to 200° C .
24. (previously presented) A device for producing and filling containers, comprising:
at least one mold having mold parts movable between open and closed positions;
an extruder for extruding at least one tube of softened plastic material in said mold with
said mold parts in said open positions;
welding edges on said mold parts for welding a projecting end of the tube to form a
container bottom;
a pressure gradient generator acting on and expanding the tube in said mold;
a movable separating element for forming a filler opening by separating the tube, said
separating element being movable above the mold between a retracted position and an operating
position;

a filling device in a sterile filling space;

a displacement device moving said mold between an extrusion position below said extruder and a filling position below said filling device in said sterile filling space;

a sterile barrier covering the filler opening of the tube in said mold from formation thereof to filling of the tube in said sterile filling space; and

a media deliverer, coupled to said sterile barrier, for conveying sterile medium in a direction of the filler opening.

25. (currently amended) A ~~method~~device according to claim 24 wherein

said sterile barrier comprises a plate-shaped cover element; and

said media deliverer comprises media outlet ports and at least one inlet port in said cover element.

26. (currently amended) A ~~method~~device according to claim 25 wherein

said media deliverer comprises a suction frame enclosing said cover element in at least one position of said cover element.